

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 28, 2006

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USDA DESIGNATES MAUI COUNTY A PRIMARY NATURAL DISASTER AREA

Wailuku, Hawaii, November 28, 2006 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture designated Maui County a primary natural disaster area due to losses caused by drought that occurred from April 1, 2006, through Sept. 30, 2006.

Maui County was designated a natural disaster area on Nov. 16, 2006, making all qualified farm operators in the designated area eligible for low interest emergency (EM) loans from USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA), provided eligibility requirements are met. Farmers have eight months from the date of the declaration to apply for loans to help cover part of their actual losses. FSA will consider each loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability. FSA has a variety of programs, in addition to the EM loan program, to help eligible farmers recover from adversity.

USDA has also made other programs available to assist farmers such as the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP).

Interested farmers may contact the USDA Maui County Farm Service Agency at (808) 244-3100 extension 2 for further information on eligibility requirements and application procedures for these and other programs. Additional information is also available online at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=diap&topic=landing>.